

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: As America’s storyteller, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, helped to create America’s identity through his portrayals of historic events and characters, as in “Paul Revere’s Ride,” “Hiawatha,” “Evangeline,” and “The Courtship of Miles Standish”; and

WHEREAS: As the poet of the people, Longfellow’s was the most widely read poetry in the English-speaking world for more than one hundred years, memorized by citizens from all walks of life. Generations of children learned to enjoy poetry through Longfellow’s carefully composed verse; and

WHEREAS: As a citizen of the world, Longfellow, a professor of modern languages at Bowdoin and Harvard, introduced Americans to the literature of the world, producing the first American translation of, among other works, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Longfellow was the first American poet to command lasting respect in other countries and is the only American poet memorialized by a bust in Poet’s Corner in London’s Westminster Abbey; and

WHEREAS: As a multiculturalist, Longfellow championed multiculturalism before that term was invented, writing sympathetically about ethnic and religious minorities and combining stories and forms from many literary traditions; and

WHEREAS: As an author of lasting influence, hundreds of libraries, schools, and other public places in the United States are named for Longfellow; and

WHEREAS: February 27, 2007, marks the 200th birthday of Mr. Longfellow and the national focus of the public-school-based “Longfellow Across America” program—an organized reading of Longfellow’s poetry designed to increase the visibility and enjoyment of his work and to foster greater appreciation of his role in helping to shape America’s culture;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MIKE BEEBE, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim February 27, 2007 as

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW DAY

across the State of Arkansas, and I urge my fellow citizens to read a poem authored by Longfellow and in turn, share the work with friends, family members, young people, and neighbors. By celebrating the work of America’s original poet of the people, citizens of the State of Arkansas will have the pleasure of rediscovering a distinctly American author; one whose influence and impact is as relevant today as it was nearly two centuries ago.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 14th day of February, in the year of our Lord 2007.

MIKE BEEBE, GOVERNOR

CHARLIE DANIELS, SECRETARY OF STATE